

WELN 325

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND SERVICE LEARNING IN WELLNESS MANAGEMENT

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"Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they live even greater."



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Introduction

Where you live impacts how you live. As our “Big Idea” suggests, everyone has a right to live in a great place...and to contribute to making where they live great. In Muncie, we understand that we are never going to have the resource of a Fishers or a Carmel, just like Costa Rica is never going to have the financial means of the United States or Switzerland. Interestingly, though, Costa Rica ranks high on the Social Imperative Index and has been identified as a BLUE ZONE (a place where a significantly higher percent of the population lives well into their 100s). What can we take away from some of the measures affiliated

with the Social Progress Imperative (<https://www.socialprogress.org/>), with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>), and with other similar initiative to help local neighborhoods take steps toward being healthier neighborhoods.

Several criteria are currently available to provide communities with a path toward developing a more vibrant and healthy environment, including Indiana Healthy Community (Wellness Council of Indiana; see <https://www.wellnessindiana.org/project/indiana-healthy-community/>), the Well Community Standard (International Well Building Institute; see <https://www.wellcertified.com/en/resources/well-community-standard-pilot>), and Walk Score (see <https://www.walkscore.com/>). Additionally, Project for Public Spaces recently released their “Case for Healthy Places” report (see <https://www.pps.org/product/the-case-for-healthy-places>) outlining ways in which Place and Health are linked based on findings from peer-reviewed journals and examples of best practices. Star Communities (<http://www.starcommunities.org/>), Human Development Index (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>), Prosperity Index (<https://www.prosperity.com/>), Gallup’s Wellbeing Index (<https://wellbeingindex.sharecare.com/>) and Happiness Report (https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2018/WHR_web.pdf), and the Gross National Happiness Index (<https://ophi.org.uk/policy/national-policy/gross-national-happiness-index/>) are some additional opportunities to identify useful measures.

The overall aim of this work is to create local environments/cultures that nudge individuals toward healthier behaviors. We will accomplish this by creating a “Healthy Neighborhood” designation and award structure that is co-produced by students in this class.

Summary

The goal for this project is to steer towards creating a versatile guide for community members and leaders to take ownership of their neighborhoods and to improve in areas that they feel necessary. Our focus was not to tell communities what a healthy neighborhood looks like, but to listen and learn what components they believe a healthy neighborhood should have. We gathered information from community members to determine what they consider to be healthy neighborhood components as well as how they view their own neighborhood (*Key Themes*). We took this information and created a document that would allow community members to easily rate their neighborhoods on the level of which they obtain these components, leaving space to brainstorm ways to make improvements. We tested this document with several community leaders by showing them the questions and asking them to rate how easy it was to answer.

Once the document had been tested and revised, we put it into practice. We went to neighborhood association meetings (*Appendix F*) and used the document to ask people how they feel about their neighborhood and how they can make improvements. Our findings can be found in appendix F.

Throughout the project, much time was spent brainstorming. We spoke to several placemaking professionals (*Appendix G*) to help us in this process. We generated several ideas for an award to present communities who make an effort to make the place they live great. We landed on a rating system working up to a 5-star healthy community status (*appendix E*). While this award may not be tangible, we find that the pride from being awarded such a status is not only enough to feel rewarded and appreciated, but also enough to encourage continuous improvement.

Key Themes

After searching multiple indexes and measures, 8 overall themes for designating neighborhoods emerged. The process started with a scan and discussion of the 10 indexes and measures highlighted in Appendix A. This resulted in the lists presented in Appendix B, which were sorted and categorized in the items that follow.

Supportive and Connected

My neighborhood is supportive and connected. The people in my neighborhood know each other, they share ideas and opportunities openly, and they offer support in both good times and in difficult situations.

Playful and Active

My neighborhood offers opportunities for me to play and be active. We have formal opportunities (like playgrounds, walking trails, and play groups) that encourage active living, and we have informal opportunities (like a built or social environment) that encourage fun and creativity.

Organized and Structured

My neighborhood is organized and structured. We have an active organizing group (like a neighborhood association), a plan for ensuring our neighborhood continues to grow and develop (like an action or change plan), and we have connections with civic and social groups so we can reach out for help when we need it.

Opportunities to Learn/Grow

The people in my neighborhood have opportunities to learn and grow. These include both formal options (like libraries, community centers, quality pre-K, social groups, and good schools) and informal options (like fun areas to explore and creative play spaces).

Healthy Food Options

The people in my neighborhood have healthy food options. My neighbors have access to affordable, healthy food either in the neighborhood or on their way home from work or school, and we organize low-cost food exchange opportunities and/or have a community garden or farmers market.

Green and Natural Settings

My neighborhood has green and natural settings. We have access to high quality neighborhood parks, and we have trees along our streets and sidewalks. We also have an active recycling program.

Diverse and Inclusive

My neighborhood is diverse and inclusive. We have people of all ages, from many different backgrounds, and with varying income levels. Everyone in my neighborhood feels welcome and has a voice.

Safe (Air, Water, and Crime)

My neighborhood is safe. We have quality air and water, and we work well with the providers of these services to ensure that the quality remains high. We also have low crime rates and a positive relationship with fire and police services.

Appendix A: Brief Summary of Some Indexes and Measures

Indiana Healthy Community Initiative

The Wellness Council of Indiana is dedicated to improving community wellbeing in Indiana and focuses primarily on workplace wellness. Indiana employers can partner with the Wellness Council to exchange ideas. They also host an annual Wellness Summit which includes several presentations on a wide variety of topics. The Wellness Council of Indiana is a great resource for wellness professionals as well as general employers to gain information and to see what's working and what isn't in the realm of workplace wellness.

International Well Building Institute - The Well Community Standard

The International Well Building Institute allows workspaces and communities to become certified with the "WELL Building Standard". The factors of consideration for certification are air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort, mind and innovation. The different types of projects for the Well Building Institute consists of buildings, interiors, as well as core and shell. The Well Building Institute is a great resource for employers and community leaders to improve the wellbeing for the people in their spaces.

Active Learning Research

Active learning research promotes active friendly communities. This organization is focused on aiding communities to increase opportunities for physical activity. They claim that communities that are designed for activity are better for health, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. Their mission is aimed at working with governments, private sectors, and advocacy groups to promote healthy and active communities. Active learning research works with public health, transportation, planning, parks & recreation, school activity programs, behavioral science, and obesity prevention. Their main goal is promoting physical activity for children and families across the world.

Index Summary for Gallup Well-Being & Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals index works to achieve and maintain a viable future for everyone. The ideas addressed in the goals of the future encompass the threats of poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. These points are interdependent and reasonable concepts to work against, achieved through the goals of the program.

Gallup Well-Being Index

The Gallup Well-Being index is both educational, on the concept of well-being, as well as informational and detailed in the rankings of independent states to show a trend and create awareness. The index provides data on numerous topics and health issues to create greater diversity and framework for the comprehension of the causes of the inadequate health that our society endures.

Social Progress Index

The Social Progress Index looks to define the successes of societies based off more than just economics. They seek to complement, not replace, economic indexes by adding measures that cover a country's access to basic human needs, foundations of wellbeing, and opportunities. Some examples of these measures include a person's personal freedom and choice, inclusiveness, and environmental quality. The Social Progress Index gives a score out of 100 for each category and then ranks each country based on the averages of those scores.

Human Development Index

The Human Development Index was created to take into emphasize that people and their capabilities should be considered when determining the well-being of a community, not just the community's economic development. They look at three dimensions: long and healthy life, knowledge, and standard of living. In these dimensions are various measures, such as life expectancy at birth and mean number of years in school. It focuses on more social than economic criteria and does not regard a community's poverty and human security.

Case for Healthy Places Report

The Case for Healthy Places report is research and data presented by Project for Public Spaces. The website provides a downloadable full report, a booklet, or a poster that summarizes key points of the report. The peer-reviewed data and research is over the last several decades present connections between "place" and health. It has been shown that one's zip codes can tell more about their health rather than their genetics. This report provides evidence-based guidance, recommendations, and case studies that would be useful for places like institutions, community organizations, and other partners who are interested in creating healthy placemaking initiatives. This report is updated every 12 months so it is perfect for new, fresh content and new ideas for communities.

Star Communities Certification

The Star Communities Certification merged with the U.S Green Building Council and is developing new, expanded LEED for cities and communities' program. It integrates information from LEED cities pilot and well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals in order to determine the award. They provide a ranking system that comes out every year in which communities are asked to aim for in their work in the community. This website provides example communities who are STAR verified, information about the STAR program, and how to become a STAR certified community. Their overall goals are to set goals, measure progress, and improve communities

Appendix B: Concepts and Measures

- Increase transportation options (2, 3) – advocate for rental bikes, cars, bike paths, bus routes, etc.
- Increase fitness options/encourage active living (2, 5, 6, 7) – Exercise stations, availability for fitness classes, 5k and other community fitness events
- Advocacy for volunteer opportunities (1, 3, 7, 8) – require Ball State students to commit hours toward community service with a class requirement where students learn more about Muncie
- Festivals – Heritage (1, 2, 3, 4, 7) – Muncie’s own “pork festival” or “back to the 50s”
- Mental Health Awareness Day (1, 2, 3, 8) – Free yoga classes and mental health facility awareness
- Community Eco Day (2, 3, 6, 8) – clean trash, plant new trees/flowers; improve community overall as far as air, water, aesthetic
- Improve pride/morale – Community Competitions (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7) – Softball tournaments, bake offs, porch decorating, etc.; meet new people, try new things, have more pride; goals as a community to “out do” other communities.
- Hazard Communication (4, 8)
- Noise level protection (8)
- Workplace education (1, 3, 4)
- Exercise education (2, 4)
- Activity programming/promotion (2)
- Community Confidence (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)
- Recycle (3, 4, 8)
- 10 Placemaking standards (all)
- Nutrition education/access (4, 5)
- Open communication (3, 8)
- Health impact assessment (3)
- Access to public spaces (2, 3, 6, 8)
- Access to primary health care (1, 3, 4, 8)
- Walkability/transportation (1, 2, 3)
- Road construction/maintenance (3, 8)

Potential Categories

1. Supportive and Connected
2. Playful and Active
3. Organized and Structured
4. Opportunities to Learn and Grow
5. Healthy Food Options
6. Green and Natural Settings
7. Diverse and Inclusive
8. Safe (Air, Water, Crime)

Appendix C: Initial List

- Quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning
- Coproducing safety
- Access to clean drinking water
- Open leadership and opportunities for advocacy
- Psychological wellbeing and mental health/emotional wellbeing
- Employment- access to employment
- Access to healthy and affordable food
- Personal safety – feel safe
- Active living
- Access to healthcare/quality healthcare
- Engaged in life
- Good transit system
- Access to information/communication
- Affordable and clean energy
- Community vitality – support and connected
- Diverse and inclusive

Appendix D: Award for Neighborhoods given “Healthy Neighborhood” Status

5-Star Healthy Neighborhood Status

Neighborhoods should work towards thriving in all 8 of the key themes mentioned to achieve 5 star status. The number of stars awarded to the neighborhood signifies their current status as a healthy neighborhood.

Appendix E: A Rating System for “Healthy Neighborhoods”



1-star community (0-16 average points)

Your average scoring of each of the healthy neighborhood categories is 0-2 points each.



Strengths: You and your neighborhood are taking the first steps towards improving and thriving. By receiving this rating, you can begin to focus your goals and aspirations for the future!

Tips to thrive: Start the conversation towards improvement! Implementing a stronger neighborhood association can make a huge difference. Remember, neighborhood associations do not need to be formal meetings! They can be something as simple as meeting with neighbors for coffee and expressing hopes and dreams.

2-star community (16-24 average points)



Your average scoring of each of the healthy neighborhood categories is 2-3 points each.

Strengths: You and your neighborhood have taken some of the first steps towards improvement. You have a group of people with common goals, aspirations, and a general agenda.



Tips to thrive: Begin the networking process! There are so many people in the city that are experts in almost anything and are willing to help. Start reaching out to other neighborhood associations and members in order to exchange knowledge/contacts!



3-star community (24-40 average points)

Your average scoring of each of the healthy neighborhood categories is 3-5 points each.

Strengths: You and your neighborhood are in the process of taking action! You have started the movement on working towards improvement. You are developing and implementing your goals into the community.



Tips to thrive: Begin making a firm agenda/schedule for your goals! Start holding more neighborhood events that include taking action on the goal you want to work towards. For example, if you want to improve your green and natural settings, hold a tree planting event!



4-star community (40-56 average points)

Your average scoring of each of the healthy neighborhood categories is 5-7 points each.

Strengths: You and your neighborhood have taken an impressive amount of action towards improvement! You have achieved some of your goals and are working towards improving and maintaining your neighborhood further!



Tips to thrive: Begin focusing in on your strengths and weaknesses! Move towards maintaining the areas you are thriving in while improving areas you might be lacking. Having someone in charge of each of the 8 aspects of a healthy neighborhood could be a successful way of doing this for your neighborhood!



5-star community (56-80 average points)

Your average scoring of each of the healthy neighborhood categories is 7-10 points each.

Strengths: You and your neighborhood have done an outstanding amount of works towards your improvement and goals. You have achieved most of your goals and are working towards maintaining your accomplishments.



Tips to thrive: Don't be satisfied! There is always room for improvement. Don't be complacent in just maintaining the work you have done. Continue collaborating with your neighbors to further your progress even more. Begin the process of collaborating further with other neighborhoods as well in order to begin the process of bettering the city as a whole.

Appendix G: Award Design Ideas

Road sign

A road sign made that would signify the neighborhoods achievement of a healthy neighborhood. The sign would be placed at the entrance or prominent part of the neighborhood.

Park bench award.

A park bench placed in a local park or common gathering place in the neighborhood. On the backrest of the bench would be a secured plaque signifying their achievement of a healthy neighborhood.

Tree plaque.

A plaque or sign that signifies that the neighborhood was recognized for meeting the criteria of a healthy neighborhood. The plaque would be placed on a tree in a prominent part of the neighborhood.

Public mural

A mural to be painted representing the community's culture and also their recognition of being awarded as a healthy neighborhood. The mural would be painted on the side of a building such as a community center or other public space.

Rock plaque

A rock engraved with the award or a plaque secured to a rock in a prominent part of the neighborhood, such as the entrance or park.

Appendix F: Conversations with Neighborhoods

Healthy Neighborhood Designation Analysis: Thomas Park – Avondale

Reflecting on March 20th, 2019, we had the privilege of meeting and engaging with members of the Thomas-Park Avondale neighborhood. Before distributing the Healthy Neighborhood Designation to the community members, we gave a short explanation on each element presented in order for the neighborhood to have an accurate representation of the ideas being evaluated. Offering space for comments, we found that encouraging the community members to explain a few ways they could help improve their neighborhood to be very beneficial. In addition to the comments, the scores received from the eight elements of a healthy neighborhood were similar throughout Thomas- Park Avondale community members.

Initiating the conversation, supportive and connected was the first topic we discussed with the Thomas- Park Avondale. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with ten being the strongest, the median score was 5, with a range of 1-9. Decent, the element of supportive and connected created a variety of discussion regarding ideas that have and have not worked. Some members said that they have been to Thursday night dinners at the Avondale Church. In addition, they valued the Ross Center being centrally located

for many activities. Most community members want to work towards inviting more people to the neighborhood association meetings.

Following, playful and active qualities surprisingly gained a low score. On average, the community rated it with a median score of 5, and range of 1-6, as it was not working preferably well. Although it was a lower scored compared to the rest of the elements, playful and active areas create a large amount for growth and development. Ideas such as a walking club, installing new park equipment, hosting a carnival and inviting friends and family to leagues such as baseball were mentioned. Each can work to create a more playful and active environment that also encourages socialization.

To no surprise, the designation regarding opportunities to learn and grow generated the greatest average score. With a median score of 6.5 and a range of 4-8, the community felt there were in good standing for the amount of opportunities and experience for growth in multiple areas. Creating a very warm and welcoming environment, many communities members feel that a mobile market would be beneficial. Additionally, some thought of creating cooking class to learn recipes and techniques utilizing food grown in the community garden.

Stemming from ideas rooted in opportunities to learn and grow, we asked the Thomas- Park Avondale neighborhood to rate their perception of the community being organized and structured. Receiving a median score of 6 with a range of 2-8, the members present during the meeting created many ideas that encompass a warm and welcoming environment. Some ideas generated were a Welcome Wagon, community garden, and cooking classes to learn techniques and recipes using the food grown in the garden developed.

Building off the idea for a healthier environment, we evaluated the community's score in regards to healthy food options. On average, most people gave a median score of 5 and a range of 2-8. Many of the community members that engaged in discussion felt there is a very limited amount of options for healthy food. Combating this concern, we came up with ideas such as more community gardens and cooking classes to offer greater variability between the food grown and knowledge of nutrition and skills to cook meals.

Following the strength of healthy food options, the members also rated the element of green and natural settings with a median score of 5 and a range of 4-6. Considering some people find this easier than others, many voiced the idea of more emphasis on recycling and utilizing outdoor trails in park and near rivers. On a positive note, the overwhelming majority believed the Ross Center is very successful in obtaining green and natural settings. As the community within the Thomas- Park Avondale neighborhood has been continuously growing, the element of diverse and inclusive received a high score. On average, the community members expressed its value with a median score of 6 and range of 2-8. Appreciating their current stance in this area, members thought that Lunch with a Cop or Newsletter would have significant effects gaining more trust in the community.

Concluding the Healthy Neighborhood Designation evaluation for the community members present at the Ross Center on Tuesday, March 19th, safety was the last category discussed. Receiving the lowest value, community members gave a median score of 4 and a range of 1-8. Although it is low, safe

conditions such as our air and water quality have a tremendous amount of work to improve on. Incorporating crime into the safety element, most members desire to have a better relationship with the police force designated to their area.

Healthy Neighborhood Designation Analysis: Riverside- Normal

Reflecting on Wednesday, March 27th, 2019, we had the privilege of meeting and engaging with members of the Riverside- Normal neighborhood. Before distributing the Healthy Neighborhood Designation to the community members, we gave a short explanation on each element presented in order for the neighborhood to have an accurate representation of the ideas being evaluated. Offering space for comments, we found that encouraging the community members to explain a few ways they could help improve their neighborhood to be very beneficial. In addition to the comments, the scores received from the eight elements of a healthy neighborhood were similar throughout the Riverside- Normal community in a positive manner.

Beginning the conversation, supportive and connected was the first topic we discussed with the Riverside- Normal community. Using a scale from 1 to 10, with ten being the strongest, the median score was 7, with a range of 4-10. Impressive, the element of supportive and connected created a variety of discussion regarding ideas such as attending SGA meetings off campus, connecting with more Ball State University students and the Muncie Art Wall. In addition, each idea presented encouraged greater socialization between students off campus and found them very willing to continuously increase the city's morale for the specific element of supported and connected.

Intrigued, playful and active qualities gained a very high score from the Riverside- Normal community. On average, they rated it with a median score of 8, and range of 4-10, as it was working preferably well. Although it generated a high median score, playful and active areas created a large amount of room for growth and development. Ideas such as the White River Greenway, dog parks, yoga on the bridge, and bike trails were mentioned. Each can work to create a more playful and active environment that also encourages socialization.

To no surprise, the designation regarding opportunities to learn and grow generated one of the greatest median scores. With a median score of 9 on a range of 4-10, the community felt they were in good standing for the amount of opportunities and experience for growth in multiple areas. Creating a very warm and welcoming environment, many community members feel that interest groups, Little Free Library, and White Rabbit & Literacy Effort would be beneficial. Additionally, some valued Stitch and Bitch at the Cup on Sunday's as a means to learn and grow in a social setting.

Stemming from ideas rooted in opportunities to learn and grow, we asked the Riverside- Normal neighborhood to rate their perception of the community being organized and structured. Receiving a median score of 8.5 with a range of 6-10, the members present during the meeting created many ideas that encompass a warm and welcoming environment. Some ideas generated were more Neighborhood Associations, Taste of the Village, and bringing more speakers in for events.

Building off the idea for a healthier environment, we evaluated the community's score in regards to healthy food options. On average, most people gave a median score of 6 and a range of 2-10. Many of the community members that engaged in discussion felt there is a sufficient amount of options for healthy food. Combating this element, we came up with ideas such as the Farmer's Market at Minnetrista, Village in the neighborhood, and the Food Coop at the village.

Following the strength of healthy food options, the members rated the element of green and natural settings with a median score of 8 on a range of 5-10. Considering some people find this easier than others, many voiced the idea of more emphasis on trees. On a positive note, they suggested Arbor dog trees, tree audit, and the AEP tree donation. As the community within the Riverside- Normal neighborhood has been continuously growing, the element of diverse and inclusive received a high score. On average, the community members expressed its value with a median score of 8.5 and range of 5-10. Appreciating their current stance in this area, members felt Muncie is diverse in terms of age, race, and gender. Also, income of the older community members play a role in their diversity.

Concluding the Healthy Neighborhood Designation evaluation for the community members present on Tuesday, March 27th, safety was the last category discussed. Receiving another high value, community members gave a median score of 9 and a range of 5-10. Although it is high, safe conditions such as our air and water quality have a tremendous amount of work to improve on. Incorporating crime into the safety element, most members desire to have a better relationship with the police force designated to their area considering the frequent village vandalism.

Appendix H: Neighborhood Designation Tool

Healthy Neighborhood Designation

Share with us a score for how you would currently rank your neighborhood.

Take a few minutes to think about how YOU could help improve each area for your community and to list those ideas below your ranking. Be creative!

- **Supportive and Connected**

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree

- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- **Playful and Active**

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree

- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- **Organized and Structured**

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree

- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- **Opportunities to Learn/Grow**

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree

- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- **Healthy Food Options**

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree

- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- Green and Natural Settings

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree
- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- Diverse and Inclusive

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree
- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

- Safe (good air and water quality and low crime)

- Score: Strongly Disagree (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10) Strongly Agree
- I would be able to help improve this area in MY neighborhood by:

Appendix I: Conversations with Placemaking Professionals

Jackie Hanoman

We met with Jacqueline Hanoman during our regular class time at MadJax. She came to talk to us about the Ross Center, where she is the executive director. The Ross Center is in the Thomas Park/Avondale neighborhood. Jackie explained to us the history of the neighborhood and the history of the Ross Center. She explained to use the sensitivity behind going into a neighborhood which you are not part of and how to operate the interviews and surveys with intentional thought and respect. Jackie explained how many times neighborhoods can be very proud and hesitant to welcome in outsiders. It can take years before a community is open to individuals who are not part of the neighborhood. She explained the best way to approach neighborhood meetings is to listen to what people have to say without telling them what they should be doing. Another point that was helpful that she taught us was to fully explain what the research is that we are doing and then to follow up and come back to the neighborhood with what we do with the information. By following up with neighborhoods instead of just going for the interview and then leaving; it lets them know we valued what they had to share, and we were doing it more than just for research purposes. Jackie taught us that following up after we attend neighborhood meetings and fully explaining our project is vital in order to gain the trust and be respectful of the neighborhood we are entering. At a later date, Jackie gave us a tour of the Ross Center and welcomed us to join a neighborhood gathering for the Thomas Park/Avondale neighborhood.

Heather Williams

Privileged to have Heather Williams join our class a few weeks ago, we had the opportunity to learn details of Heather's responsibilities and association to Ball State University. Introducing herself, Heather

Williams works as the Building Healthy Neighborhoods Program Manager for BSU. We were intrigued to learn that she works directly with Muncie's neighborhood associations. By doing so, she is working to build capacity and create more connections with the faculty, staff, students and programs throughout Ball State. In order to understand her interest and accountability in her present work environment, Heather elaborated on her educational background and experience. Amazed of her work ethic and dedication, we learned Heather earned three degrees from BSU, a Bachelor of Arts in History and Masters Degree in Business Administration and Urban and Regional Planning. Throughout her areas of expertise, she has worked as a planner in Muncie through the Unsafe Building Hearing Authority and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3. Reflecting on her personal experience, we thought Heather's efforts throughout the city could help direct and guide our ways of thinking as we work on the Healthy Neighborhood Designation. In addition, our class would like to make more connections throughout the city in order to work to meet the growing wants and needs of the neighborhoods. Utilizing Heather's relationship to the town of Muncie, in addition to Ball State University, our class had the opportunity to visually see her passion in each piece of work she tackles throughout a variety of neighborhoods. Lastly, we found many similarities between Heather William's efforts, which advocate for strong neighborhoods that are safe, affordable and promote sustainable living, and the elements we created and developed in our Healthy Neighborhood Designation. Using the time available with her, the class created many questions to help advance our ideas within the project using Heather's prior experience in the field.

Suzanne Clem

We met with Suzanne Clem from Open Door Health Services on Thursday, January 31. The meeting consisted of Suzanne explaining Open Door and the services that they provide for the community. Open Door is a not-for-profit, federally qualified health center. Their services include dental, medical, family planning, WIC, and behavioral health. They also offer a variety of assistance programs for patients. Suzanne mentioned a struggle with getting information into the community. It seems as if a lot of people are unaware of the services that are provided, specifically the free assistance programs. She reached out to our class to see if we had any ideas for her. We suggested going to places such as daycares where families may be seeking information. Making connections with people in the community who are trusted by the people is important for spreading information. Open Door is an essential part of the culture of health in the Muncie community. Access to affordable healthcare is a key value in a healthy neighborhood. It's important that members of the community are aware of Open Door and the services that they provide so that they can move closer to thriving in their own personal wellness.

Kevin Titzer

When our group first began thinking about our final project, we came up with many ideas. All of us thought of very uniquely different ideas that churned up a lot of creative thinking. A lot of our ideas got us very excited, perhaps too excited! With our original idea of the destruction/prediction workshop and art piece, it sounded good at the time. It sounded simple, unique, and fun for the people of Muncie. However, this idea began to unfold when working out the details. What things would be destructed? Who knows how to put things back together? How could we put this into the public? With all of these questions beginning to pile up, we then contacted Kevin Titzer, an Indiana native artist who specializes in similar forms of art that we were thinking.

When Kevin agreed to meet with us, we learned a lot from him. He told us about some work he is doing with the city of Muncie for the next few months to create a piece that symbolizes the community. With a similar goal to ours, he told us the many struggles of the kind of work that he does. It was then that we realized that our idea may have been too big of a task to handle in one semester and we decided on something more manageable. The overall lesson from Kevin was that when you don't know how to take on a project, ask someone who does. Getting outside opinions and outside ideas can spark a new direction or path to take, which is exactly what he did for us!

Susannah Rosenthal

When it comes to finding ways to develop healthier neighborhoods and encourage anywhere play, some sense of creativity is needed. Therefore, our group met Susannah Rosenthal, former Head of Advance Product Development for Mattel Toys Inc. Susannah sparked our interest in creative design by sharing her story. Susannah has been working with design her whole career, working for Hallmark before her transition to Mattel. One of her most prominent contributions to the toy company was a new design for Barbie dolls that remains popular to this day. After hearing her story, we presented Susannah with our designs for our Play Anywhere cards and explained to her our final project. She was kind enough to give comments on what we were doing well and what could use some improvement, and we considered these comments when preparing for the final weeks in our class. Her insight was helpful and her presence in our class was an interesting and fun experience.